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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**October 22, 2018**

### **Working together in the relief effort**

The Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce expresses our sympathy to those who were affected by the adverse weather events this past weekend. As part of the Joint Chambers – a coalition of business services organisations that includes the American Chamber of Commerce, the Energy Chamber, the Manufacturers’ Association, the Coalition of Service Industries and the T&T Chamber – we have mobilised our members to provide support to flood victims. We are also working with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as the Living Water Community (among many others), to assist wherever possible. Today, we will be sharing a list of drop-off locations and bank account numbers through which concerned citizens can make financial donations.

We recognise the efforts of all individuals and NGOs that have come out to help. We saw many examples of citizens who responded generously – and in some cases, heroically – by opening their homes, donating time and supplies, and reaching out to those affected. Similarly, we recognise so many in the business community who have supported the effort, donating products and/or money to help in the relief effort.

There has been a debate about the usefulness or value of having what has been called a “national shutdown”. While large areas of the country were affected by flooding, many others have thankfully been spared – and the reality is that those who have been impacted by this disaster need time, resources and support to get their lives back in order. To do that, they need the assistance of both those who are in the same boat, and those who were more fortunate. We hear calls for a wide range of much-needed services – including security – that need to be performed by people on the job. We understand that some members of the protective services, for instance, themselves affected by the floods, have been called for duty. Even as we commend these brave men and women for their service, we need to recognise that this is, in part, a requirement of the crisis. In short, for flood victims to be able to recover from the devastation they are faced with, the country needs to function.

The T&T Chamber recognises that both public and private sector employers should be sensitive to the needs of any staff who have been impacted by these events. We therefore encourage all employers to make the necessary arrangements to provide support for employees who have either been touched directly, or have experienced the negative ripple effects of the disaster, such as complicated transportation and access

logistics. According to feedback from our membership, most companies have implemented staggered work hours, or are allowing employees to work from home where possible. Although certain jobs will require workers to be present on site, it is heartening that businesses are making arrangements to accommodate employees' current constraints.

We hope the weather will be favourable in the coming days; however, we all need to continue to work together and remain focused on helping one another in order to ensure the quickest possible recovery.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those who have been affected, and we stand ready to support the relief effort in any way we can.

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